



Official
Newsletter
of the
Fort Vancouver
Trades Guild

THE forge & plane

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SUMMER 2009

No beeps, no touchpads, real mice: Living (and thriving) before the Industrial Revolution

EVERGREEN STATE COLLEGE, in Olympia, offered a course titled “Livelihood, Dwelling and Skills” this summer. Study focused on skills necessary for individuals to live and thrive before the Industrial Revolution. To that end, students explored various trades and crafts by using the technology of the mid-18th century and earlier in three media: wood, stone, and metal.

On Monday, July 6, over half the class came to visit Fort Vancouver (after first stopping at former volunteer and guild member Glen Stollmeyer’s shop, in Castle Rock, to buy some of his famous GS tongs). They arrived around 3:30 PM, and I showed them around. Luckily, long-time volunteer and raconteur Bob Conner was in the blacksmiths shop that day to explain some of what we do there. The various fort venues — blacksmiths shop, carpenters shop, bake-house, and kitchen — provided an opportunity for the students to be exposed to several basic crafts of the preindustrial age.

On Wednesday, July 8, I was invited to visit the Evergreen campus for a follow-up lecture, demonstration, and hands-on session



Photo: Evergreen State College

Bill DeBerry introduces students to preindustrial blacksmithing.
Note postindustrial gas mask . . .

on basic blacksmithing as we practice it here at Fort Vancouver. I loaded my Newton Forge Works Model 4 (see *F&P*, Winter 2009) and a couple of anvils into the trailer and took off. The set-up at the campus was quite nice, with a couple of coal forges and a large Johnson gas forge, plus four anvils for student use. With my equipment, we had six forging stations for fourteen students. The classroom/demo area was outside, under cover, behind the Arts Annex.

The lecture covered the origins of the blacksmithing trade and various raw materials that were in common use, as well as blacksmithing practice just prior to and after the Industrial Revolution. I demonstrated the standard initial apprentice projects at the fort — drawing a round bar to square, forging a classic wall hook, and finally a Williamsburg tasting spoon. The students then tried their hand at some projects, and for first-time smiths, some of their results

were quite satisfactory. After the class wrapped up, around 9 PM, the students helped put away tools and equipment and load the trailer.

I passed out flyers for the Williamsburg Workshop with Shel Browder, to be held at the fort in late October, so we may see some of these folks again. It was a fun opportunity and one that I hope will be repeated. ♦

— *Bill DeBerry*

Starting from scratch: Fir tree becomes furniture for new village houses

THE PAST COUPLE OF months have been busy ones in the carpenters shop. Everyone has seen the felled Douglas fir at the east end of the parking lot. The tree, a gift from the Gifford Pinchot National Forest, was rough sawn in the parking lot then milled off site to provide the stock needed to construct tables and chairs for the new houses being built in the village outside the palisade. Volunteers Clay Ford, Wade Seiders, and Regis de Andrade did some of the roughing out on the project, and John Miller and John Niemeier are doing some of the finish work. Excellent plans for the tables were drawn up by Patrick Neal. Park ranger Marv Binegar has also put a lot of time and effort into the project, cutting out parts and fabricating the unfinished chairs.

Marv wishes to remind us all that more volunteers are needed to work on the tables. And, since some of the chairs are to be laced with rawhide, it would be particularly helpful if anyone with rawhide experience would step forward to help. ♦



Photos: S. Gawrecki



Two views of chairs handmade in the carpenters shop to furnish new dwellings being constructed in the village outside the palisade



Blacksmiths Day at Champoege

Left: Bob Conner gets some kid-style power hammer help with heading a nail

Below: Under the spreading chestnut tree . . .

ON JULY 18, FORGE VOLUNTEER Bob Conner and guild member Susan Gawecki hosted an off-site demonstration at Champoege State Park. The focus for this year's forging was fire strikers. The weather was hot and dry, unlike our last event at Champoege, which was closed down because of rain. In between making fire strikers for the kids, Bob found time to help a few eager participants try their hand at heading nails. Heading nails has become a very popular hands-on activity for youngsters on Blacksmiths Day at Champoege. Once again this year, Bob hauled all the iron and tools



Photos: S. Gawecki

from Estacada to Champoege, but this time he had a brand new refurbished trailer that he and son Glen have been working on over the winter. ♦

Work/study helper for carpenters shop

ONE OF THE NEWER FACES around the carpenters shop on Fridays is Stan Rubaneko, an electrical engineering student at Clark College, who helps with various projects at the shop. Stan immigrated to the Vancouver area from Anapa, Russia, seven years ago and polished his English language skills in the Vancouver public schools ESL program. Now, at age 19, he's doing his best to help us keep the fort in good repair and using that fluent English to share his knowledge of Fort Vancouver with visitors. And it's



Photo: S. Gawecki

Stan gives the cannon frame a coat of paint

no accident that Stan landed in the carpenters shop: his father makes his living as a finish carpenter in the Vancouver area. ♦



Great Oregon Steam Up 2009

THE END OF JULY always means tons of fun at the Great Oregon Steam Up at Antique Powerland in Brooks, Oregon. This theme for this year's event was "Made in Oregon." The blacksmith shop at Powerland, managed by Gary Strausbaugh with the help of Jeff Sawyer, was looking good with new metal chimneys (see photos) for the forge hoods. As the power hammer played its familiar tune, visitors were treated to smithing by veteran blacksmiths Bob Race,



Photos: S. Gawrecki

Left: Jeff Botts at the anvil
Above: Bob Race and Gary Strausbaugh punch holes in a door pull

Dennis Torresdal, Don and Joyce Kemper, Jeff Botts, Jeff and Nadine Sawyer, Bob Conner, Allen Hopkins, Dean Moxley, Neal Pope, Glen Stollmeyer, Garron Guest, and, of course, Ralph Hinds. Many thanks to all the guild members who participated in this signature Oregon event. ♦

Weekend Workshop with Williamsburg's Shel Browder

Colonial Williamsburg blacksmith Shelton Browder will be returning this fall to give another demonstration at the Fort Vancouver forge. Shelton has been a blacksmith since 1985 and has worked at the Colonial Williamsburg Anderson Forge for the past fourteen years. The three-day workshop will take place Thursday through Saturday, October 29 – 31, from 9:00 AM to about 4:00 PM, with a break for lunch. Fees, payable at the door, are \$20 per day, plus a one-time service charge of \$10 for non guild members. The surcharge will be waived for students with a valid student ID. Please bring a friend and join us for this unique blacksmithing opportunity. ♦



Photo: S. Gawrecki

Shelton Browder at the Anderson Forge



Photo: M. Gawecki

Annual Meeting of the Fort Vancouver Trades Guild
Left to right: Jeff Cawley, Ted Anderson, Bob Race, Susan Gawecki, Bill DeBerry, Larry Coffield, Denny Nelson, and Craig Webster

New Guild Board Elected

NEW BOARD MEMBERS were elected at the June 14 annual meeting of the Fort Vancouver Trades Guild, held in the conference room above the Indian Trade Shop. New officers are Craig Webster, president; Larry Coffield, vice president; and Ted Anderson, secretary/treasurer. Elected board members are Dennis Torresdal, Jeff Cawley, and Bob Race. Gary Lewis is continuing to serve as off site coordinator. Discussion at the meeting centered on ways to increase members' participation in guild activities and

ways to collaborate more on joint projects for the fort. Those present at the meeting agreed that the Williamsburg Weekend would be promoted to students in metals programs at local colleges and that the surcharge for non-members of the guild will be waived for students.

NOTE: The next guild meeting will take place during the lunch break on Friday, October 30, at the Williamsburg Weekend workshop. ♦



Photo: S. Gawecki

Some cook iron, some cook fondue:
Gary and Jody Lewis at the forge

2nd Annual Newton Hammer-In

LAST YEAR WE ALL hoped it would become an annual event, and on July 26 guild member Harry Newton made it happen, once again going above and beyond to host a hammer-in at his home in Battleground. And once again, the weather cooperated with a record high. New guild president Craig Webster brought photos of hardware needed for the houses under construction in the village, and every one lent a hand to make strap hinges and pintles. It was a pleasant surprise to see guild member George Blackman, from

Redmond, pounding out a pintle. George was visiting family in Battleground and he stopped by to see what kind of no good we were up to. Next year, we promise awards to the guys who travel furthest to join the (take note, Harry) Third Annual Newton Hammer-In. Many thanks to our guild chefs, Gary and Jody Lewis, who proved you can cook a lot more than iron on a forge. Jody's fondue was real forge cuisine, a recipe obtained from some down under Aussie blacksmiths. ♦

Notes from the President

FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO do not know me, I am your new guild president, Craig Webster. I have been blacksmithing for the past three years, all of it at Fort Vancouver. For good or ill, everything I know about blacksmithing I have learned at the fort and from guild members. I am trying to visit both blacksmiths and carpenters shops on different days, to meet as many of you as possible. It is going to be more difficult to get to know guild members who are not active volunteers at the fort. Anyone who wants to grab a cup of coffee or a beer is welcome to contact me.

One of the things that I think is critical to becoming a more effective guild is that we get to know one another better and do more things together. To further that, I want to organize many more events to bring us together and help us become better at our crafts. My ideas are listed below. I'd like to see at least one of this type of event every month. Training volunteers and improving our skills needs to be a priority for the guild.

Hammer-Ins: At the at the fort as well as off site, like the one Harry Newton recently held. Anyone else in the guild who might be willing to host a hammer-in please contact either Gary Lewis or myself. And, although I am calling these events hammer-ins, carpenters in the guild should feel welcome too. We spend far more time socializing and swapping stories than we do actually hammering.

Guild Workshops for Blacksmiths: Hands-on workshops featuring some of the better craftsmen that we have within our own guild membership.

Workshops for Carpenters: The guild should sponsor workshops for carpenters as well. There are many local resources that we can tap into. Any specific suggestions would be appreciated.

NWBA Workshops: Hands on workshops featuring some of the "hot stuff" blacksmiths from around the Northwest.

I am also exploring the possibility of having some sort of Christmas party for guild members and guests. This could be held either at the fort (possibly over in the kitchen) or off site. Although it might prove to be better for this type of party to take place off site, I plan explore the possibility of a partial potluck, with some items brought by attendees and the rest of the meal prepared on site by one or more of our fine fort cooks.

I want this to be a strong guild, one that partners with the fort to create the living history that so enhances visitors' experience. I understand that this is a very ambitious program. Many of you have voiced hope that the guild could be more active. It is my desire to have exactly that — a guild that is more active, interesting and fun. This is something we can accomplish, but only if we work together. If we do work together, we can make this guild as good as it has ever been, maybe even better. I would greatly appreciate any comments or suggestions that any of you might have — even if it's only to tell me that you think I'm crazy. ♦ — *Craig Webster*

FORT VANCOUVER TRADES GUILD CALENDAR

CAMPFIRES AND CANDLELIGHT
September 12, 5:00 PM

SHOP CLEANUP DAY
September 26, 9:00 AM (or so)

TOOL REPAIR WORKSHOP
October 17, 9:00 AM

WILLIAMSBURG WORKSHOP
October 29 – 31, 9:00 – 4:00

WILLIAMSBURG HANDS-ON FOLLOWUP
November 14

GUILD WORKSHOP
HARDIES: CARE, FEEDING, & CREATION
Instructor: Bob Race
December 5

**FIRST ANNUAL FOVA TRADES GUILD
CHRISTMAS PARTY**
December 12 or 19 (tentative)

GUILD WORKSHOP
Instructor: Jeff Cawley
January 9 (tentative)



Hammer-in at the Fort

GUILD MEMBERS AND nonmembers joined company on July 10 for a hammer-in at the fort. The after-hours event was a chance to do a little forging, bring a friend, meet fellow craftsmen, and make new friends. Events like these show how the diversity in our membership can increase our own knowledge of the crafts and improve our interpretation for visitors to the fort. We hope to sponsor more of them and to incorporate a broad base of support for both the carpenters shop and the blacksmiths shop. ♦

Cassie Eckman at the forge
Photo: Clay Ford



Photos: S. Gawrecki

Tool Abuse

WHY WOULD someone who professes to be a blacksmith and a maker of tools abuse tools? The shop has recently suffered both a burned hardy and a severely gouged anvil horn. Damage to both tools occurred on the northeast forge. It is hard to find any justification for such irresponsibility. A smith who doesn't pay enough attention to

the fire to realize that the end of the hardy is burning up shows a lack of care and concentration that call into question his usefulness at the forge. None of us would treat our own tools like this, so why such disregard for tools at the fort? Accidents do happen: if the damage was accidental, it should have been reported to Bill or Doug. If they were not immediately available, they should have been informed via phone or email. ♦

EVENTS FOR BLACKSMITHS

NWBA 30th Anniversary Fall Conference 2009

Southwest Washington Fairgrounds
Chehalis, Washington
October 23 – 25
Conference Coordinators
Ina Culberson 360-275-6769
Tim Maddaugh 509-493-4418
www.blacksmith.org

Classes for Blacksmiths at Meridian Forge

LIGHTING

Instructor: Joe Elliot; Project: Floor Lamp
September 11 – 13, Fee: \$350

MAKING & THROWING TOMAHAWKS

Instructor: Darryl Nelson; Limited to 5 students
September 26, Fee: \$125

(continued on next page)

EVENTS FOR BLACKSMITHS

(Classes at Meridian Forge, continued)

FORGE WELDING

Instructor: Darryl Nelson; Limited to 5 students
October 5, Fee: \$125

ANIMAL HEADS

Instructor: Darryl Nelson
October 9 – 11, Fee: \$350

WESTERN STATES BLACKSMITHING CURRICULUM BASIC

Instructor: Mark Aspery
October 30 – November 1, Fee: \$350

TOOLS FOR THE BLACKSMITH

Instructor: Shel Browder, Master Smith at Colonial
Williamsburg

Project: Hacksaw frame, brace, and bits
Limited to 9 students

November 6 – 8, Fee: \$350

For more information, contact the Meridian Forge
37010 Meridian East, Eatonville, WA 98328
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EDITOR'S NOTE: Limited space in this issue prevented us from including the Fort Vancouver events calendar. Please check the park website www.nps.gov/fova or call 360-816-6230 for an up-to-date schedule of activities and events.



THE
forge
&
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The Forge & Plane is the official newsletter of the Fort Vancouver Trades Guild. Please send your comments, submissions, and suggestions to

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